Trouble in Paradise

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Summary: Nate wants Cleo, Emma and Ash are in a misunderstanding and Rikki has a run-in with the eclispe...can things get any worse? Rikki abandons the group, Lewis sees Cleo with Nate...can anything be peaceful when there's trouble in paradise?

1. Chapter 1

Trouble in paradiseâ€¦

Cleo Setori walked peacefully along the gold coast beach.

Time alone felt good but she much preferred a swim with her friends who, at the time were tied up in their own affairs.

The cool breeze ran through her hair, making her feel even more relaxed.

She reached fro her phone and sat down on the soft sand.

Dialling Lewis's number, she blushed knowing he would greet her really sweetly.

"Hi Lewis, I was feeling a bit lonely and wanted some company" She smiled.

Little did she know Nate was strolling around just a few metres away.

He strutted over and began to demonstrate body builders muscles.

_This is one thing chicks can't resist _he thought confidently.

He'd always had a thing for Cleo, luckily Zane was in the dark about this.

"Yeah, dinner tonight at Mako would be great" Cleo hung up and grinned sheepishly to herself.

She pocketed her phone and turned to see Nate showing off.

She felt her throat throb as if she was about to be sickâ€¦

"Oh, hi Nateâ€¦" Cleo mumbled uncomfortably.

She tried ignoring him but he was so in your face it was impossible.

Nate was always trying to chat up 'chicks' and basically he just wouldn't shut up and go away until you responded or walked away and hid.

"Couldn't help noticing me could ya?" He posed.

Cleo actually wanted to throw up.

"Look Nate I'm not interested, I'm with Lewis" Cleo got up and began to walk away but Nate grabbed her by the arm.

Cleo closed her eyes and took a deep breath.

Nate wasn't going to leave her alone was heâ€¦

Cleo had always felt and known that Lewis was her man and she didn't need another butting in.

She and Lewis had something special and never had she given Nate a romantic thought. Ever.

She'd rather stick pins in her tail than except a date withâ€¦Him.

"Nat-a-roo doesn't take no for an answer" Nate tried to pull a charming smile, which would make Rikki faint in disgust. "Come on.."

Cleo slapped her knees and stood up.

The waves crashed behind her softly, agreeing.

"Nate, for the last time, I'm sorry but I'm not interested" She tried to sound sorry even though the thought of dating him was sickening.

She walked away, when out of sight she dove into the water and powered away to Mako island.

You'll change your mind chick, Nate thought determinedly, _the Nate-a-roo don't take no for an answerâ€¦_

He strutted away planning his next moveâ€¦

Emma finished applying a small layer of gloss to her lips and shrugged to herself smiling.

It smoothed on perfectly and she needed to look perfect for her

date.

She wore her best summer dress, threaded with painted, wooden beads.

She pulled it down, loving the feel of it's cotton and knowing it was the perfect choice of clothing for the perfect day.

It was the look and showed off her mood.

Or that's what she thought at least, Cleo was more the fashion type.

She scooped her black bag up from the sofa and pulled open the door, strolling into the sunlight.

Emma arrived at her destination on time as always and took her seat in the juice net.

It was silent apart from Rikki who was sitting a few tables away scribbling something on an essay.

Emma blinked, was Rikki actually completing homework ON TIME?!

She dismissed the unusual sight and sighed, shaking off her worries.

She wanted to be relaxed and happy for her date and concentrate completely on Ash.

Suddenly, Ash slipped through the beaded curtains, an uncomfortable expression on his face.

"Just in time!" Emma beamed. "I prepared your favourite juice!"

She handed him a yellow-in-colour juice and smiled again.

Her own special blendâ€¦

Ash smiled weakly back and looked down at his shoes.

He sunk into the chair and stared at the table, trying to look as if he were happy and looking at something fascinating.

Emma's ice-cream sat on the table, slowly melting in the room temperature.

Emma stuck out her palm and re-froze it.

Ash felt a thud against his ribs and a weird sensation run down his body.

"No! please!" Ash stood up from the table. "Emma, can I talk to you?"

Emma felt her stomach lurch, _what? He's always been ok with it ever since I told himâ€¦_

Ash pulled her to the side and gulped slightly.

"What's wrong Ash?" Emma asked.

"Iâ€¦I've be thinking, about our relationshipâ€¦" He began cautiously, "You beingâ€¦aâ€¦a mermaidâ€¦"

Rikki lifted her eyes from her work.

"What about it?"

Emma suddenly realised, it was obvious.

He thought she was a freakâ€¦

"Why Ash?" She choked, eyes prickling.

"I believe, I need some time to thinkâ€¦" Ash continued.

Oh noâ€¦I've done it again!

"You're dumping me.." She nodded and turned her head away.

Rikki walked slowly towards them.

"Noâ€¦I meanâ€¦I justâ€¦!" he tried to reassure, but Emma had other ideas.

"No Ash I get itâ€¦" She nodded again and left, continuously having to wipe her eyes.

She ran out, a few tears trailing behind her, swept back in the breeze of her departure.

"Nice one Ash!" Rikki said sarcastically.

Cleo lay flat on the water, eyes closed in a relaxed state of mind.

The moon pool was quiet and serene, the water silkily sliding across her many scales and fingers.

Her peaceful world was shattered when a loud splash echoed from the tunnel.

Emma rose from the water and swam over to the edge.

She hid her tear-stained face in her arms and sobbed silently.

Cleo turned over onto her stomach and pushed her hair out of her eyes.

Cleo drifted over and spoke softly in her ear.

"What happened Em?"

Emma felt a surge of hurt and exploded.

"Nothing!" She snapped.

Cleo flinched and drew back.

"Is it any of yourâ€¦business?" Emma sniffled.

Cleo swam over to the other side, her tail bobbing on the water.

Emma turned to face Cleo and folded her arms.

_Maybe right now wasn't the best time to askâ€¦_Cleo thought to herself.

Rikki raised and eyebrow at Ash after he finished his explanation.

"The next time you plan to talk to your girlfriend, don't make it seem like your breaking up with her!"

Ash slapped his forehead in pure shame.

"The only thing you can do now is try and talk to her" Rikki suggested "I can't help any more than that"

With that she left, strolling over to the dock and jumping into the water.

Ash sighed harshly, why was so hard to get girls to understand?

Cleo swam gently over the reef.

Giving Emma space was the best thing she could do for her right now.

She passed her hand through the seaweed and across the coral, relaxing.

The weed was velvety and felt weird on Cleo slightly shrivelled fingers.

The current was smooth and swept across her skin soothingly.

If only I could convince Emmaâ€¦she'd love thisâ€¦ Cleo thought.

She spent a long time admiring the reef before emerging from the water to inhale some air.

As she dove down again she noticed Rikki swimming below looking bothered slightly, as if she knew something odd was going to happen.

Cleo swam towards her and Rikki smiled.

Emma felt her eyelids ache slightly.

Her tears had escaped for so long her eyes were sore.

She wiped her eyes again, wincing slightly as it stung.

Maybe a relaxing swim would calm her down, or make it worse knowing Ash had rejected her due to her scaled tail, she pondered on this for a while then sunk beneath the cool, clear water.

Swimming away from Mako, she cleared her mind and tried to ignore the factsâ€¦

It had began to darken in the sky.

And that was a bit odd for 12:23 in the afternoonâ€¦

Rikki hadn't noticed, though, she had been too busy enjoying the water with Cleo who'd gone to search for odd looking crustaceans.

It was true that being a mermaid was fantastic and this was the perfect example.

The problems of her life had been swept away to the back of her mind as she pelted into the moon pool, slicing her way through the water.

She took in a deep breath as she broke through the surface of the water.

But, she was completely unaware of the terrible mistake she had just madeâ€¦

Across the Australian sky, darkness fell.

The once bright sun was disappearing behind a shadowy disc.

"I haven't seen a proper eclipse in ages.." Lewis said fascinated.

Max Hamilton nodded in agreement, not really paying attention much.

"Wait hold on thoughâ€¦" Lewis suddenly paused. "Isn't the moon still full?!"

Max nodded again.

He'd had a lot of experience and knew exactly why Lewis would ask.

"Max!" Lewis shook the elderly scientist.

"I know, I know and I didn't warn youâ€¦" Max said guiltily.

"About what, Max are the girls in danger because they're out their now, swimming!"

Max's eyes darkened slightly and abruptly he grabbed Lewis by the shoulders.

"Lewis, if you can make it in time, keep the girls away from the moon pool!" He alerted urgently.

Lewis began to panic.

"Why?" Lewis questioned worriedly.

"A full eclipse could have any unpredictable effect on the girls, you

must stop them," Max dropped his arms to his sides.

Lewis had no time to argue, Max had experience on mermaids, more then he had had.

Lewis ran backwards, waving goodbye.

He stumbled over a tree root running for his boat.

Heading out to sea, the engine roaring, Lewis feared for his mermaid friendsâ€¦

Just as she was fully relaxed, Cleo's thoughts were disturbed.

The whirr of the boat ceased and it floated gently on the surface.

_Lewis, _Cleo thought, _he'll keep my mind off Nateâ€¦_

She swam upwards through the water and lifted her head from the sea.

Lewis breathed a sigh of relief, one mermaid down 2 more to findâ€¦

"Cleo, the eclipse!" Lewis babbled urgently.

The moon was fully covering the sun now, coating the gold coast, Mako and the ocean in darkness.

"What about it, wait the full moon's out isn't it?!" Cleo panicked.

What could happen now!

What if something had already happened and her friends were in danger?

"I don't know, but Max, he saidâ€¦" Lewis's head blocked the remaining sunlight. "The eclipse could have unpredictable effects on any mermaid in the moon pool when it passes over!"

Cleo's heart thudded, hard.

"I'll find Emma and Rikki and warn them!" She said.

"Ok but quick we have only minutes!" Lewis hurried nervously.

Cleo ducked under the water and powered away as quick as she could, to begin the searchâ€¦.

Emma twirled in the water, feeling more content than about half an hour ago.

Suddenly, she heard a strange whoosh, something was speeding towards her.

Cleo, abruptly, emerged from the bubbles and rushed Emma to the surface.

She hurriedly explained everything, knowing they had only minutes to find Rikki, once above the water.

"I'm sure I saw Rikki swim into the moon pool as I left" Emma offered suddenly realising the danger their friend was in.

Oh noâ€¦RIKKI! Emma panicked, who knows what the eclipse could do to her, or to them!

Cleo's eyes widened and she dove back under the water.

Only, minutes were leftâ€¦

Rikki sunk down slightly in the water.

She felt calm and chilled out, the worry of something had dissolved into the tide.

It was dark in the moon pool but it didn't bother her.

Still, something didn't feel right about the darknessâ€¦

Suddenly, in the middle of the pool, the water began to bubble.

Rikki pulled away from the edge and stared up through the peak of the volcano.

The full moon, covering the sun, was hovering above the moon pool.

Foam and froth circled around her and thumbnail sized bubbles of water twirled upwardsâ€¦

Lewis slid down the tunnel, dislodged rocks clattering down after him.

He ran as fast as he could, without bumping into the walls, into the cavern.

Lewis stumbled into the cave met by Rikki, wide eyed in confusion and slight fear.

"Lewis what's happening?!" Rikki demanded.

"Grab my hand!" Lewis instructed urgently.

Rikki reached out but she knew it was already too late.

The display was slowly wilting like a dying rose, back into the moon pool.

"I should've come soonerâ€¦" Lewis said under his breath.

Too be continuedâ€¦what will happen between Emma and Ash? Will Nate win Cleo? And what happens to Rikki?â€¦

2. Everything gets worse before the better

Eclipse of the heart (featured song: My heart will go on, total eclipse of the heart)

Cleo and Emma were flooded with worry.

What if Rikki had been in the pool during the eclipse?

Being mermaids, the girls had had to face many full moon fiasco's and mermaid myth related spells and possessions.

It was all part of this mermaid thingâ€¦

They made it to the land entrance of the moon pool, in the darkness.

They slid down the tunnel, ending up sprawled on the rocky floor.

They climbed to their feet, riddled with worry.

Cleo and Emma ran into the cavernâ€¦

Rikki was laid out on the hard ground, eyes closed, Lewis shaking her.

"What happened?! Was sheâ€¦" Emma pointed to the moon pool, where the last of the froth was dispersing.

The moon could do terrifying things but an eclipseâ€¦

The Blue moon had been enoughâ€¦

Suddenly, Rikki's eyes flew open.

"What are you looking at?" She spat.

Lewis backed away.

Rikki looked down at her scaled tail and stretched a hand out across it.

"Rikki are you alright? What happened?" Cleo knelt down beside her friend.

Rikki finished drying herself then got to her feet, looking down on Cleo.

"I'm a mermaid, why would anything be different?" Rikki said sourly, turning to face the water.

There was nothing to concern her, Rikki was her own person.

She had independence and a secret that was totally under control!

"Something's happened to herâ€¦ this isn't the real Rikkiâ€¦the eclipse!" Cleo whispered.

Rikki turned to scowl at her.

"Do me a favour Cleo!"

To her right now, she felt a lot fresher and had no time for people smothering her.

She felt empowered and had no time for wet mermaids like Cleo who shrivelled easily.

Cleo stood up and placed two hands on Rikki's shoulders, forcibly turning her around.

"Rikki! What's wrong! This isn't youâ€¦" Cleo demanded ignoring Rikki's bitterness, this was important.

Rikki's eyes narrowed and she shook Cleo's hands off.

"Get it into your heads that I'm not interested, now kindly leave me alone or else!" she growled and dove elegantly into the moon pool's now-calm water.

She relished in the wonderful feeling of hitting water and looked around as she transformed and began to swim out to the open sea.

She looked around as she exited through the enchanting tunnel which had underwater kelp and seaweed flowing in the current, sprouting from it's coral walls.

Looking back over her tail she could see the disappearing figures of her friends looking over concerned.

She couldn't care less though, she had the tail and the only thing she wanted to look back on from the moment ago was the blue of the moon pool's water which was now only visible slightly from the entrance of the tunnel, since Rikki was now ocean swimming.

"She hasn't acted like this since the planetary alignment on Halloweenâ€¦" Emma had her voice low.

The very thought of that made her spine tingle and Lewis looked shaken now it had been brought up again.

"At least she isn't as violentâ€¦" Cleo whimpered pathetically.

Rikki swam silently through the ocean, over the coral reefs.

How could things be any better? She had her tail, her powers, the full moon, the freedomâ€¦

What else did she need?

Cleo was back at the juice net, head in hands.

She had so much to worry about and her fear for Rikki was increasing as she fantasized in side her mind all the possible things Rikki could do or was capable of in this strange state of mind.

Nate spotted her from the other side of the cafÃ© and put on a "dashing" smile.

This was his chance!

He strutted over and sat down in her stall, on the coach opposite.

"Oh noâ€¦" Cleo murmured.

She shifted her eyes towards the wall.

She didn't have time for disgusting boys right now, hitting on her and smothering her with mushy comments.

"So, you free tonight?" He lent back, trying to give the impression of a laid-back, cool dude.

Cleo gritted her teeth. "Noâ€¦"

"Shameâ€¦thought we'd grab a meal outâ€¦" He trailed off, not sounding disappointed.

Cleo clenched her fists, even her hair seemed tense wrapped in a ponytail.

She was with Lewis but no matter how many times she tried to beat it into Nate's skull he continued to persist!

Why didn't he get the message he was totally repulsive and no one was attracted to him!

Especially not Cleo!

"How about tomorrow thenâ€¦" Nate put his hands behind his head.

Cleo leapt from her seat.

She'd had enough of his laid- back, you-know-you-want-me smile.

Her eyes narrowed and her fists clenched, anger rising like a bush fire.

She felt hot and steam was seeming to be pouring from her ears.

"NATE PLEASE!" Cleo snapped a little too loudly. "I'M WITH LEWIS!"

Nate seemed perfectly relaxed.

She didn't intimidate him and he loved believing that Cleo was only angry because he wasn't begging for her.

Cleo just can't resist me and is too embarrassed to admit it! Nate thought casually.

Nate was just one of the most conceited, girl attention grabbing (unsuccessful) boy on the gold coast.

In anger, Cleo slammed her hand down on the table, knocking over her juice.

The liquid travelled silently across the table until it leaked over her skin.

Cleo's eyes widened as she felt the cold sensation of liquid pour over her hand.

She gasped and ran out of the juice net in panic.

Nate stared at her in confusion but didn't want to break his cool, Cleo was slowly falling for him he was sure.

Cleo made it to the water with only a second to spare.

She felt her lungs shrivel and had to get to the surface.

Cleo lifted her head quickly from the water to take a breath and sigh, then dove back under the waterâ€¦

Emma padded miserably over the beach of Mako.

Why did everything have to go wrongâ€¦

She still was in disbelief and misery about Ash dumping her over her being a mermaidâ€¦

How immature could he get? Though at least he could think it overâ€¦

The thing was though Ash had always been Ok with it and never showed any facial signs it was bugging him at all.

On top of that, a more bigger problem was Rikkiâ€¦

She'd stayed out at sea all day.

The eclipse had done something to her, hopefully not that serious but still it could be a danger if it came in phases.

If she wasn't swimming, though, she was ignoring her and Cleo or telling them to bug offâ€¦

What else could go wrong?

Cleo's hair was swept back by the current.

It had been relaxing about 2 hours ago now it wasn't even noticeable.

The coral didn't even seem pleasing right now, even if it wasn't smothered in brown moss.

Nothing could calm or relax Cleo right now, she felt too miserable and glum with all these dilemma's buzzing around.

She peered through the lightened water, spotting another mermaid a few metres away.

The familiar pale blonde hair managed to aid Cleo so she could hazard a guess.

Rikki glowered at her and began to swim away.

She suddenly powered away in a rush of bubbles.

Cleo thought and she decided she didn't care what Rikki threw at her, she was going to help to bring back her real friend, the real Rikki.

Cleo lifted her head from the moon pool water, it was warm and relaxing.

"It's me, Cleoâ€¦" She murmured cautiously.

Rikki sighed and rolled her eyes, although it wasn't bitter.

Cleo pushed herself through the water over the edge of the pool, crossing her arms over it.

"What's happened to you Rikki, you act like you don't want to know usâ€¦" Cleo frowned.

Rikki snorted.

"The eclipse has made me a better person, I'm more mermaid than I've ever beenâ€¦" Rikki announced proudly.

"That's not it, Rikki it's changed you, nothing else could've done it but the full moon" Emma said entering the conversion, newly arriving from the open sea.

"Look, I don't have time for thisâ€¦" Rikki began, sounding fiercer.

"Rikki, we don't know what's happened but we're going to reverse it!" Emma declared smiling.

"Reverse what?! All that's happened is me embracing the water, I'm more mermaid than you two, I've found my true calling and I accept it" Rikki swept towards the middle of the moon pool and sunk below the water.

"What are we going do?" Cleo whimpered.

"We have to talk to Max, maybe he can provide answers since he warned us" Emma said logically.

"I'll find Lewis, maybe he can help" Cleo smiled weakly.

Emma felt a pang in her chest, _Ash would want to help if he didn't have a grudge against her being a mermaidâ€¦._

Emma nodded, not looking Cleo in the eye and dove under the water, Cleo right behind her.

Cleo stumbled up the bank, slipping on the wet mud.

Nate was leaning against a tree, not noticing Cleo walking past.

Or at least pretending not too.

"Hey Cleo!" He waved, acting like he'd only just seen her.

Lewis was coming towards them from the juice net.

"What do you want Nateâ€¦" Cleo began.

Nate grabbed her by the arms and pulled her lips to his.

Cleo, wide eyed pulled away sharply.

But it was too late.

"What was that!" Lewis asked, eyes narrow.

Nate's eyes glimmered evilly.

"Nateâ€¦heâ€¦" Cleo stammered.

Lewis turned and trudged away, feeling as though a storm cloud had appeared above his head.

Cleo marched up to Nate.

"You planned this!" She bellowed.

Nate grinned "The Nate-a-roo doesn't take no for an answer"

Cleo said nothing and charged away to the water, out of sight.

Rikki had left the beauty of the sea and made for her caravan.

She strolled past her Dad Terry, head held high.

"Hey Rikki!" He greeted.

Rikki smirked then turned towards her room, ignoring him.

Terry furrowed his eyebrows.

Rikki had never acted like this beforeâ€¦

That night Cleo and Emma slept rough.

Flashing images of all past full moon experiences flashed through their minds violently.

They twisted and turned, cocooned in the duvets.

Little did they know, Rikki was going through the sameâ€¦

Rikki woke suddenly.

The room was dark and she couldn't see anything.

Her dream still echoed in her mind.

_It's nothing, just a nightmareâ€¦anywayâ€¦ _She thought confidently.

Rikki sunk back under the warm covers.

But as soon as she closed her eyes the images flooded back.

She leapt out of bed and hovered over to the window, looking out across the marina.

A shimmer of light from the crescent moon glittered across the water, the image disturbed as the sea rippled.

Rikki felt the pull of water, it had been stronger than ever normally since the eclipse.

She opened the window, letting the cold breeze flow past her hair and the salty scent drift past her nostrils.

Rikki decided that a swim in the night might clear her thoughts so she could concentrate on the more important things, like sleepingâ€¦

She crept out of the house into the midnight air and down to the canal.

The soft, cold Australian night breeze swept across her body as she reached the edge of the water.

Elegantly, she stepped into the water then dove forward.

The seawater splashed in small jet as Rikki departed to the open ocean.

The ocean at night felt refreshing and new.

Rikki let everything bothering her fade.

The corals and fish seemed to be sleeping, like a calm different world.

Rikki raised her head from the sea and looked at Mako.

The volcano was surrounded by the usual silvery mist which looked like it could fade at any moment.

The crescent moon hovered above the east side of the island.

Rikki admired it for a moment then sunk back below the water, heading for the moon pool where maybe she could relaxâ€¦

Cleo woke in the early hours of the morning, sweating lightly.

She rolled out of bed and flicked on the light.

That was a really weird dreamâ€¦ Cleo thought quietly.

She stumbled down the stairs, trying to make her footsteps become silent so she didn't wake her father or Kim.

Cleo entered the Living room, turning on both switches for the kitchen as well.

She grabbed herself some breakfast from the fridge and slowly ate it.

But, even though everything seemed normal, if you could call it that right now, Cleo couldn't help thinking that something was wrongâ€¦somewhereâ€¦

Rikki had been in the water the entire night.

She hadn't slept much, the good feel of the water had been amazingâ€¦

The eclipse, in her eyes, had opened her thoughts a little.

But, it seemed to be fadingâ€¦

She'd been feeling slightly oddâ€¦

But she tried to ignore it, she wasn't weak like the 'other' two, she was pureâ€¦

Or at least for nowâ€¦

Lewis sat alone on the beach of Mako island, staring out at the sunrise.

The sky was subtle yellow with a dash of orange.

Usually he and Cleo would be here, together, taking about issues and trying to resolve them through discussionâ€¦

But that was clearly over because of Cleo's act with Nate.

Lewis swept back the soft sand with his fingers trying to enjoy the cool breeze which was sweeping across the island.

It was meant to be relaxing according to Emmaâ€¦

Though even she of all people had a problem which didn't seem to have a solution right now.

Lewis pictured Nate and Cleo hanging out, Cleo showing him her secretâ€¦

He violently shook that vision from his mind, it wasn't going to happen.

There was a splash and the waves seemed to be disturbed.

A shape was appearing through the current and then it lifted its head from the water.

Lewis recognised it to be Emma.

"Hey Emâ€¦" Lewis murmured.

Emma looked up from the sand and smiled weakly.

The small waves surrounded her and her long orange tail which sat firmly on the shore.

Lewis wandered over and sat down in front of her.

"What are you doing here so early?" She asked, suddenly realising it may've sounded a bit rude.

"I need time to thinkâ€¦Cleoâ€¦" Lewis trailed off before he choked.

Emma was confused, _Cleo and Lewis always come here togetherâ€¦_

"Why aren't you with Cleo?" She ventured.

Lewis looked at her, his eyes misted over.

Emma swallowed, what'd happened?

"She and Nateâ€¦kissedâ€¦" He choked.

Emma gasped.

This was totally not like Cleo, she would never go with Nate even if she was paid!

Nate was arrogant, flirty and just really unrealistic.

He was even worse than Zane!"What?! How could she do that to you!" Emma's tail fin hit the water furiously.

How could Cleo do that to her boyfriend? It was so not right?

And now she had three things to worry about!_Thanks a lot Cleo! _Emma thought angrily, as if she didn't have enough to think about with Rikki possessed by an eclipse!

End
file.